



Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone by Thomas Moran, courtesy of the Interior Museum.

A PASSAGE OF PERCEPTION

Polar visions have bracketed the Department of the Interior for most of its history: one viewed America's vast natural resources as commodities to be exploited for economic gain; the other saw a deep ethical obligation to preserve and care for nature's creations.

The core of Interior's story has been the search for a fair and workable resolution of these paradoxical views on how to manage the national landscape. The Department's responsibilities for public lands and waters, minerals, forests, and wildlife have evolved over the years in response to the changing needs and concerns of the American people. This national passage of perception and values continues today.

Despite its initial role as "The Department of Everything Else"—an appellation stemming from its disparate duties—Interior's major continuing responsibilities have focused on managing the public domain in the West and carrying out the nation's trust relationship with Native Americans.



Eastern timber wolf.
Photo by L. David Mech, FWS

That focus has steadily sharpened during the past century and a half, from encouraging the settlement and development of the West to conserving federally managed natural resources and restoring endangered wildlife and damaged ecosystems across the country. American Indian policy also has evolved—from early, ill-conceived attempts to control Native Americans and force their integration into the nation's Euro-American mainstream to today's policies of self-determination and self-government.

The rationalization of Interior's responsibilities—the streamlining and clarification of its missions—ended *ad hoc* functions and spun off peripheral duties, often giving birth to new Cabinet agencies such as the departments of Agriculture, Labor, Commerce, Veterans Affairs,

Education, and Energy. This process won for Interior its other well-known sobriquet—"The Mother of Departments."

Social and political movements that helped to shape today's Department include the national park initiative of the late 19th Century, the conservation crusade of the early 20th, and the environmental movement of the past four decades. Through their influence, Interior has become a principal agent of the American people's desire not only to conserve but also to restore the nation's natural and cultural resources without destroying the livelihoods of American communities.



Bald Eagle. Photo by Al Milliken, FWS

With the aid of science and technology, restoring polluted watersheds and ravaged landscapes has moved from ecological concept to reality—in the Northwest Forests, along the Platte River, in the Florida Everglades, and in California's Bay-Delta, to name but a few of the initiatives. Driven by a powerful grassroots environmental ethic, there is widespread public support for cleaning up degraded rivers and landscapes and living, working, and prospering on them in ways that maintain their health and sustain their productivity.

With a new spirit of partnership among governments, industry, and private groups, restoration not only addresses social and economic needs but also offers interest groups and communities an opportunity to reconcile their differences after decades of conflict over how to manage the national landscape.

Editor's Note: This article is excerpted and adapted from The Department of Everything Else, the official history of Interior written by National Park Service historians Robert M. Outlay and Barry Mackintosh.

BORN IN CONTROVERSY

In the decade of the 1840s, the cry of “Manifest Destiny” expanded the vision of Americans to continental dimensions. In quick succession came the annexation of Texas in 1845, the resolution of the Oregon boundary dispute with Britain in 1846, and the Treaty of Guadalupe Hildago concluding the Mexican War in February 1848. In three years, the United States enlarged its domain by more than a million square miles, reaching nearly its present size between Canada and Mexico. Widely applauded by Americans, this burst of expansion also prompted sectional controversy over the extension of slavery.

Much of the contention centered on the organization of the new territories. On the last day of the Thirtieth Congress, March 3, 1849, the eve of **Zachary Taylor’s** Presidential inauguration, the Senate and the House of Representatives struggled to find a formula for giving California a civil government. As amendments flowed back and forth between them, Senators found time to debate, also with some heat, another bill prompted by the enlargement of the national domain. This was legislation to create a Cabinet agency to be known as the Home Department or the Department of the Interior.

The idea was almost as old as the nation. The First Congress in 1789 considered a department for domestic affairs but finally decided to combine domestic with foreign concerns in the Department of State. The Home Department proposal inspired discussion and debate for more than half a century and enjoyed the support of Presidents from **James Madison** to **James K. Polk**.

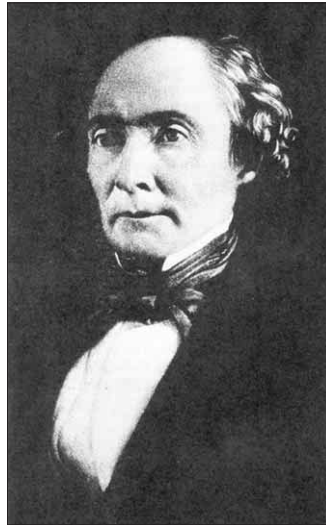
The Mexican War, enormously enlarging the responsibilities of the Federal Government, gave the proposal new impetus. It found an articulate champion in President Polk’s able Secretary of the Treasury, **Robert J. Walker** of Mississippi. The General Land Office, which oversaw and disposed of the public domain, had been placed in the Department of the Treasury because of the revenues generated from land sales. Secretary Walker foresaw hordes of lobbyists and land speculators, drawn by the prospect of large profit in the new territories, swarming upon and corrupting the General Land Office.

In his annual report for 1848, Walker pointed out that the duties of the General Land Office had little to do with the other functions of his department. The Patent Office in the State Department, the Indian Affairs office in the War Department, and the pension offices in the War and Navy departments were equally remote from the primary responsibilities of those departments, he added. All, he declared, should be brought together in a new “Department of the Interior.” A bill to give effect to Walker’s proposal passed the House of Representatives on Feb. 15, 1849, and reached the Senate floor on that chaotic final day of the session.

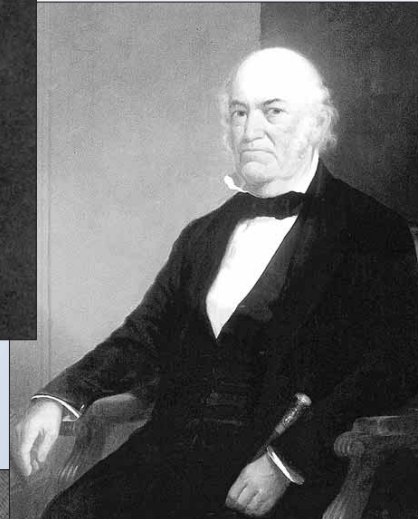
The Senate debate swirled around sectional issues, with southern opponents voicing fears of expanding central government. Senators **John C. Calhoun** of South Carolina and **James M. Mason** of Virginia spoke out vigorously in opposition. “There is something ominous in the expression ‘The Secretary of the Interior,’” declared Calhoun, the eloquent champion of states rights. “This is a monstrous bill. It will turn over the whole interior affairs of the country to this department, and it is one of the greatest steps that has ever been made in my time to absorb all the remaining powers of the states.”

Though aligned with Calhoun on states’ rights, Senator **Jefferson Davis** of Mississippi represented a state then as much western as southern in orientation and joined Senator **Daniel Webster** of Massachusetts in favoring the bill. Webster disclaimed a centralizing tendency in the proposed department: “I see nothing but a plain, practical question. There are duties respecting our foreign relations and there are duties respecting our internal affairs.” Far from posing a sinister threat to sectional interests, he argued, the bill contemplated no more than an administrative reform consolidating internal responsibilities. “That is the whole of it.”

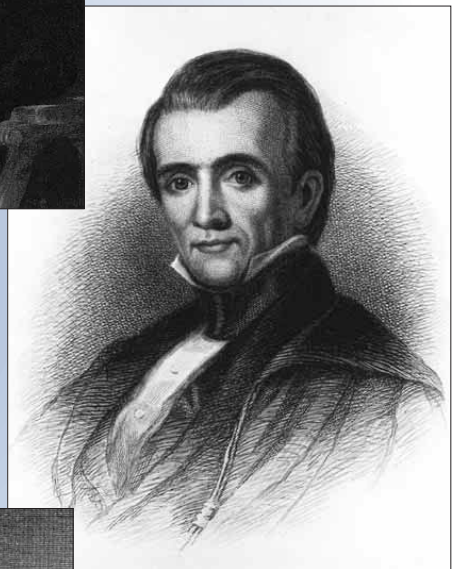
The vote, when it finally came on the night of March 3, divided less on sectional than party lines. Democrats, reluctant to award the patronage of a new department to the Whig Administration entering office next day, voted nay. Whigs voted yea. When the gavel signaled adjournment, Senators had failed to agree on a government for California; that would come as part of the Compromise of 1850. But they had decided, 31 to 25, to create a Department of the Interior.



Secretary of the Treasury Robert J. Walker, left, was the most forceful proponent of a Home Department because the General Land Office in his department was swamped with the work of selling the public domain and adjudicating the thousands of land title disputes. He had to personally rule on more than 5,000 disputed titles from 1845 to 1848.



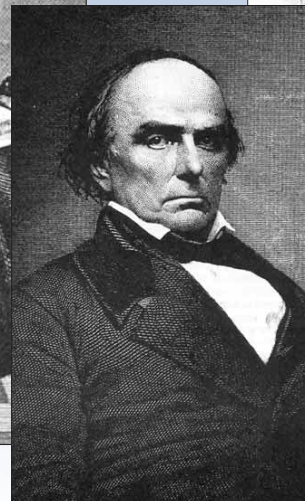
For the first Secretary of the Interior, President Taylor turned to Thomas Ewing, left, a sturdy, colorful product of rural Ohio. Frontier lawyer, U.S. Senator, Secretary of the Treasury under Presidents William Henry Harrison and John Tyler, Ewing had long been a force in Ohio’s Whig councils.



President James K. Polk



John C. Calhoun



Daniel Webster



The Department’s first seal



From 1852 to 1917 the imposing Patent Office building, one of America’s most distinguished architectural monuments, served as headquarters of the Department of the Interior. Today, the building houses the Smithsonian Institution’s National Portrait Gallery and National Museum of American Art.

WESTERN EMPHASIS

A sampling of tasks assigned the Department suggests the scope of its cares in the last half of the 19th Century. These ranged from the conduct of the decennial census to the colonization of freed slaves in Haiti; from the exploration of western wildernesses to the oversight of the District of Columbia jail; from the regulation of territorial governments to construction of the national capital's water system; from the management of hospitals and universities to the operation of public parks. Such functions together with basic responsibilities for Indians, public lands, patents, and pensions gave Interior officials an extraordinary array of concerns.

Because western problems stimulated the Department's birth, the West was the scene of many of its activities. Two of the major bureaus, Indian Affairs and the General Land Office, operated chiefly in the West and a galaxy of lesser offices performed duties vital to western interests. In the history of the opening of the West and the conquest of the frontier, the role of the Department of the Interior attains towering significance.

Native Americans were tragic victims of the westward movement. As the tribes fell one after another to military conquest, or simply to the effects of diminishing game and territory in which to pursue it, the Indian Affairs bureau stepped in. It employed 2,000 to 3,000 people by the 1880s, when the reservation program got into full swing, and managed the affairs of 260,000 people assigned to 138 reservations, mostly in the West.

On these reservations, agents and their staffs sought first, to control the Indian and keep him away from the paths of westward expansion, and second, to "civilize" him, by which they meant transforming him into a Christian farmer embracing the values of 19th-Century white America. As one Indian Commissioner expressed it with unconscious irony, the aim was "to make the Indian feel at home in America." Employing an elaborate system of rewards and penalties, agents, schoolteachers, "practical farmers," missionaries, Indian policemen, and sometimes soldiers labored to attain the two objectives of control and civilization.

Indian policy evolved in a storm of continuing controversy, with reformers, humanitarians, politicians, and frontiersmen—to say nothing of the Indians themselves—prompted by diverse impulses and offering conflicting advice. A tragic example of ill-conceived policy was the Dawes Act or General Allotment Act of 1887, which attempted to force cultural integration by doing away with communal ownership of land. Heads of Indian families would receive 160-acre allotments, with the Secretary of the Interior holding titles in trust for 25 years. As Indians became individual landowners and farmers, tribal affiliations would wither and the need for reservations would evaporate, policymakers believed. But few Indians were prepared to make such a huge cultural leap. Like other federal Indian policies of the 19th Century, the Dawes Act wreaked cultural havoc upon most tribes and later underwent major revision.

Though fundamentally flawed, these policy initiatives arose from humanitarian impulses and reflected the most enlightened thought of the times. Far from aiming at extermination, as popular myth would have it, Indian policy reflected the intense desire of the generation that freed the slaves to present the Indian with what was then viewed as the grandest gift at the nation's command—assimilation into the Euro-American mainstream. Unfortunately, the well-meaning authors of these policies failed to foresee their terrible cost in human suffering. Moreover, the Indian Bureau operated under constant and often well-founded criticism of corruption and inefficiency in its handling of the millions of dollars in supplies purchased each year for the reservations. More than any other responsibility, Indian affairs tried and troubled successive Secretaries of the Interior.

Extinguishing Indian title to the land and concentrating the tribes on reservations freed vast stretches of the public domain for other uses. Disposing of public lands was the job of the General Land Office. Dating from 1812, the land office played a major role in trans-Appalachian settlement under the Public Lands Act of 1820, which allowed tracts as small as 80 acres to be sold for \$1.25 an acre. It loomed especially large in the westward movement following the enactment of a momentous trio of laws in 1862. Under the Pacific Railroad Act, land grants made possible the speedy

construction of the Union Pacific, Central Pacific, Northern Pacific, Santa Fe, and Southern Pacific railroads. Under the Morrill Act, land grants financed the establishment of state universities and agricultural colleges. And under the famed Homestead Act, settlers obtained free 160-acre homesteads. Railroads received more than 94 million acres while homesteaders ultimately claimed almost 290 million acres.

Led by railroad promoters to expect a bountiful land that had "only to be tickled with a hoe to laugh with a harvest," sodbusters discovered that a homestead, as one Irish immigrant put it, was more often a wager between the government and the settler over whether the settler could make a living. But most stayed and by 1890 they had spread so broadly over the plains and mountains that, for the first time, census statisticians could not trace a frontier of settlement on the map of the West.

Large portions of the public lands passed into private ownership in ways that later generations have lamented. Fraud and corruption sometimes marked the process. Corporate interests and speculators reaped windfall profits while individual homesteaders struggled against frequently overwhelming obstacles. Though the

General Land Office shared in the criticism, successive commissioners could never persuade Congress that stewardship over almost a billion acres of land, half the United States, required a more ample staff than was ever allowed. Even at its peak in the 1880s, the office scarcely surpassed 1,000 employees, and nearly half of these were clerks who toiled in Washington over huge ledger books in which land transactions were recorded. As one historian has noted, the office labored under the handicaps of "crowded quarters, inadequate personnel, overburdened officials, low pay, and rapid turnover of clerks."

More important in its defense, the General Land Office administered laws enacted by the Congress. Some, such as the Pacific Railroad Acts of 1862 and 1864, explicitly favored limited corporate interests. Others, such as the Timber Culture Act of 1873 and the Desert Land Act of 1877, were

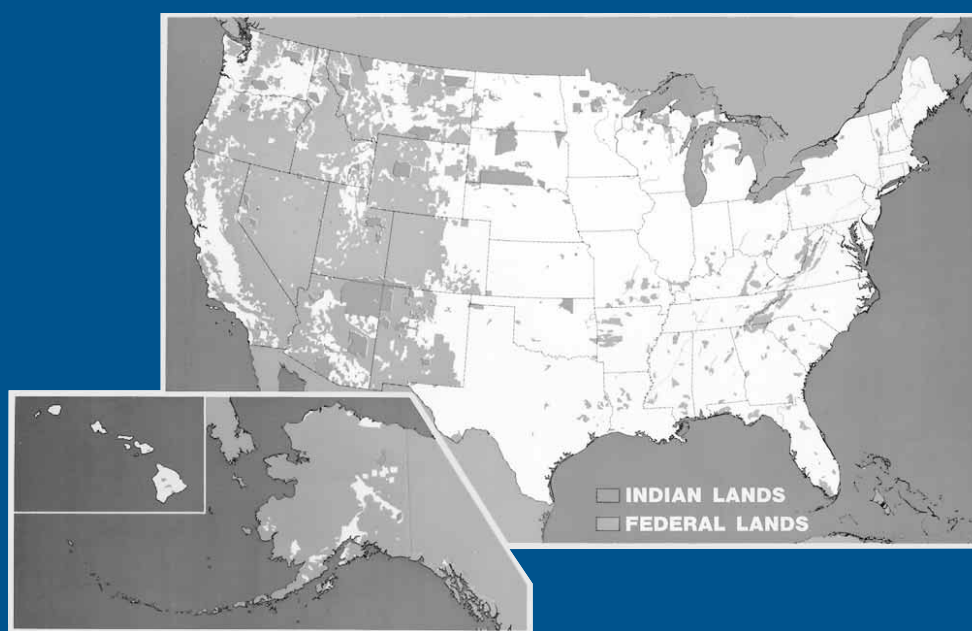
invitations to fraud and spoliation. Still others, including even the Homestead Act, were based on faulty knowledge of western climate and geography and thus in some of their consequences caused great misfortune. The fault lay less with the administration of the law than with the absence of a body of law expressing a comprehensive policy for the equitable disposition of all classes of public lands.

In the years following the Civil War, Interior challenged the War Department's historic preeminence in the conduct of official explorations of the American West. **Ferdinand V. Hayden's** United States Geological Survey of the Territories, begun in 1869, produced beautifully illustrated books describing the rich resources of the West. Because of his preoccupation with utilitarian attractions, he has been termed "*par excellence* the businessman's geologist." One-armed **Major John Wesley Powell**, famed pioneer of the Colorado River, conducted the Geographical and Geological Survey of the Rocky Mountain Region, launched in 1874. Powell's work and ideas, which emphasized the need for scientific, rational treatment of the West and its resources, helped to lay the base on which the next generation founded the conservation movement and federal irrigation for the West.

Together with the War Department surveys of **Clarence King** and **Lt. George M. Wheeler**, the Hayden and Powell surveys overburdened the West with explorers and caused rivalries that unsettled the scientific community as well as official Washington. The solution, adopted in 1879, was the consolidation of all the western surveys in the Interior Department and the formation of the United States Geological Survey. Clarence King served briefly as the first director of the Survey, followed by John Wesley Powell, who served from 1881 to 1894.

While Interior's new Geological Survey concerned itself with the West's utilitarian treasures, the Department assumed special responsibility for scenic treasures as well. In 1872, Congress established the world's first national park, Yellowstone, under Interior jurisdiction. Others, including Sequoia, Yosemite, and Mount Rainier, followed in the 1890s. After civilian management of Yellowstone proved ineffective, the Secretary of the Interior arranged for military contingents to protect several of the parks until Congress created a specialized bureau—the National Park Service—for this task in 1916. (*More NPS history is on pages 2 and 57 to 65.*)

Federal and Indian Land Grants in the U.S.



UTILITARIAN CONSERVATION

As the 20th century opened, the Department became progressively concerned with a movement aimed at reorienting the nation's traditional practices of handling natural resources—land, timber, water, minerals, wildlife. Most 19th-Century Americans held these resources to be inexhaustible and government regulation of their exploitation alien to democratic principles. Basically, Interior's mission was to dispose of them to private enterprise, individual and corporate. A few men of vision dissented from this philosophy. **Secretary Carl Schurz** fought to halt the devastation of forests in the public domain. John Wesley Powell preached a gospel of systematic and purposeful resource management. The creation of the first national parks and the Forest Reserve Act of 1891, promoted by Interior Secretary **John W. Noble**, marked modest erosion of the traditional philosophy. But not until **Theodore Roosevelt's** Administration (1901-09) did the doctrine of Schurz, Powell, and their sympathizers flower in a national crusade for conservation.

To them conservation did not mean, as often alleged, that natural resources under federal control should be locked up and saved for the future. On the contrary, the conservationists advocated rational, planned, orderly use. Their goal was not an end to exploitation, not even private exploitation, but rather wise development and use guided by science, facilitated by technology, regulated by government, benefiting society. Thus power and irrigation sites would be leased to private enterprise and developed according to government standards. Mineral deposits would be mined under a lease system. Forests would be logged and grasslands grazed under permits that guaranteed sustained yields of timber and grass.

The leader of the Roosevelt conservationists was **Gifford Pinchot**, the dynamic head of the Division of Forestry in the Department of Agriculture. Allied with Pinchot were **William A. Richards**, a former Wyoming governor who served as commissioner of the General Land Office from 1905 to 1907; **Frederick H. Newell**, chief engineer of the Geological Survey's Reclamation Service; and **W J McGee**, secretary of the Inland Waterways Commission, who was appointed by President Roosevelt in 1907 to design multiple-purpose development of river basins. Youthful and zealous, these men enjoyed direct access to Roosevelt but almost no rapport with **Ethan Allen Hitchcock**, the elderly and conservative Interior Secretary held over from the McKinley Administration. When Roosevelt replaced Hitchcock with **James R. Garfield** (son of the former President) in 1907, the conservationist acquired a supportive Secretary.

The Forest Reserve Act of 1891 authorized the President to set aside forest lands on the public domain. Lands thus reserved remained in the custody of Interior's General Land Office. Judging Interior's management of these forest reservations unscientific and unproductive, Pinchot and his allies campaigned for their transfer to Agriculture. Lumber, grazing, and power interests backed them, and in 1905 Congress enacted a transfer measure. The forest reserves, then comprising 63 million acres, formed the foundation of the national forest system. Pinchot's bureau was renamed the U. S. Forest Service and he became its first chief forester.

While maneuvering to take charge of the forests, Pinchot gave strong support to a movement that launched reclamation as a major activity of the Department of the Interior. His interest was an outgrowth of John Wesley Powell's studies showing the connection between forests and water storage. Irrigation in turn championed Pinchot's forestry programs. The reclamation movement bore fruit through the Newlands Act of 1902, which provided for the construction of dams and aqueducts to water arid and semiarid lands in the West. To carry out this ambitious program, the Reclamation Service was organized in the Geological Survey under Chief Engineer Frederick Newell.

The Reclamation Service became a separate Interior bureau under Newell's direction in 1907 and was retitled the Bureau of Reclamation in 1923. The Salt River project with its Roosevelt Dam, begun in 1903 as the first major effort under the act, made Phoenix, Arizona, an agricultural center of first importance. Later Bureau of Reclamation projects—including such world-famous works as the Hoover and Grand Coulee dams, the All-American Canal in California, and the Alva Adams Tunnel beneath the Continental Divide in Colorado—brought water, flood control, electric power, and recreational resources to vast areas formerly incapable of sustaining major settlement, crop production, and industrial development.

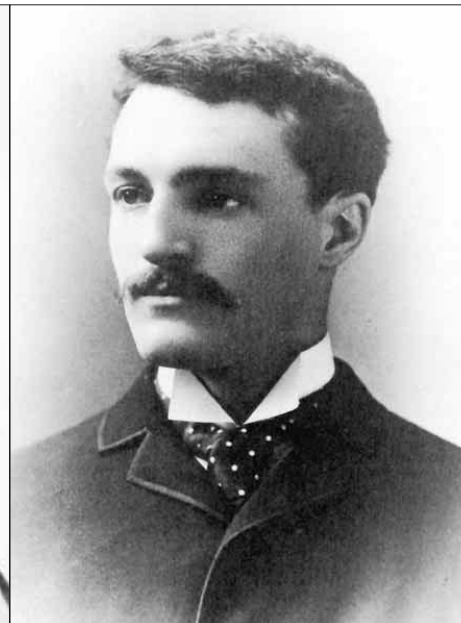
The conservationists, including Pinchot's allies in Interior, wanted to apply his principles of scientific planning and use to all public lands administered by the General Land Office. Part of their program



President Calvin Coolidge dedicates Mount Rushmore on Aug. 10, 1927. Although he reportedly disliked wearing cowboy hats, he apparently didn't mind wearing their boots. NPS photo courtesy of the Harper's Ferry Center Historic Photographic Collection



President Theodore Roosevelt, above, ushered in a new way of looking at the nation's lands and resources. Roosevelt believed that conservation, as a utilitarian tool for sustained economic growth, strengthened American democracy. He encouraged the Federal Government's acquisition and management of public lands and natural resources and his legacy is seen across the country in parks, forests, and wildlife refuges. His conservation ethic helped to frame the approach to resource management for the next 100 years. Above right, Gifford Pinchot as he appeared in his Yale yearbook. Right, a portrait of John Wesley Powell, circa 1890.



was a lease system for livestock grazing within range capacities. Another, considerably more ambitious, was comprehensive planning and development of entire river basins. The main objective here—later achieved in large measure through the Bureau of Reclamation—was to further agriculture and industry through water resource development, the cost to be defrayed by the sale of hydroelectric power. In 1907-08, however, both proposals met defeat in Congress. Controversy among cattlemen, sheepmen, farmers, and watershed protectionists doomed the grazing program while the Army Corps of Engineers, long charged with public works in navigable rivers, effectively opposed giving the Inland Waterways Commission a statutory mission of comprehensive river-basin planning.

In the last years of Roosevelt's Administration, conservationists realized that further major gains were unlikely through legislative action. Comprehensive resource planning and development threatened local interests and alliances and so encountered insurmountable obstacles in the Congress. Increasingly, therefore, they sought to advance their cause through executive action. Secretary Garfield withdrew from other disposition most of the good sites for waterpower development. Roosevelt, forced to sign an Agriculture Department appropriations bill that prohibited further Presidential creation of national forests in six western states, first reserved 16 million more acres there. Roosevelt later recalled how opposing interests "turned handsprings in their wrath" over the setting aside of these "midnight reserves"—a stroke described by a Forest Service historian as "the last flamboyant act of the conservation movement."

The conservation crusade and formation of other Interior bureaus to promote its goals sharpened Interior's focus on natural resources and continued a drift away from the "Home Department" concept. Interior became less a grab bag of miscellany and more a natural resource agency. Pensions and patents (two of the original "big four"), education, hospitals, and other such activities gradually dropped out. Parks, mines, and reclamation, originally concerns of the General Land Office and the Geological Survey, were elevated to separate bureau status; new responsibilities for fish and wildlife later arrived from the Commerce and Agriculture departments.

THE ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENT

When Interior marked its 100th anniversary in 1949, the nation was well into the post-World War II boom. The economy had rapidly expanded as veterans returned home, married, and started families, generating enormous housing, transportation, and consumer product demand. "Baby Boom" families and developing communities alike wanted more houses, cars, appliances, electricity, lumber, steel, beef, and water. Industrial production, aided by technological advances of the war years, retooled to meet these needs and generated unprecedented productivity and affluence.

The postwar period was marked by the rapid growth of mass production and mass communication technology and increasing urbanization. The nation's service sector expanded, requiring more highly trained workers with new skills and offering expanded educational opportunities and higher-income jobs. The Baby Boom generation grew to maturity with significantly different values than their parents' generation, including a greater emphasis on quality of life issues. With more leisure time and a new interstate transportation system, urban affluent Americans also wanted more recreational opportunities at national parks, recreational areas, refuges, and historical and cultural sites.

As westward migration had exacted a toll on the public domain, the nation's burgeoning postwar population and industrial expansion heavily taxed public natural resources, often with little concern for the drastic effects of pollution on air, water, and land. The Cold War generated an arms race, leading to atmospheric testing of nuclear weapons and highly publicized incidents of radioactive fallout contaminating soil and food. The American public's complacency began to give way to growing concern about environmental and public health issues. **Rachel Carson**, formerly a biologist and editor with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, was one of the most influential voices for ecology in this period. Her controversial 1962 book *Silent Spring*, which described the dangers of the pesticide DDT and other chemicals that were poisoning the environment, was particularly powerful in raising public awareness and concern.



Red Tail Hawk by Doug Canfield, FWS



President Lyndon Baines Johnson signs the Wilderness Act and the Land and Water Conservation Act at a Sept. 3, 1964 ceremony at the White House. Interior Secretary Stewart L. Udall is at far right, while his younger brother, Rep. Morris K. Udall, third from left, towers above the group. The two women in the group are Mardi Murie (light hair) and Mrs. Howard Zahniser, wife of the "Father of the Wilderness Act." NPS photo courtesy of the Harper's Ferry Center Historic Photographic Collection

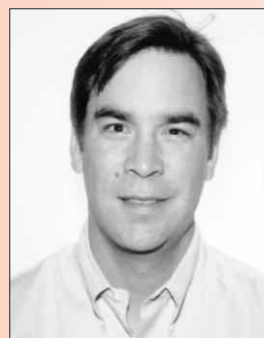
A leading federal voice for the environment was **Stewart L. Udall**, Secretary of the Interior during the Kennedy and Johnson administrations. Concern for land and water conservation was a keystone of his tenure and he translated the early stirrings of the environmental movement into a Department mission. Udall's popular 1963 book *The Quiet Crisis* warned that "America today stands poised on a pinnacle of wealth and power, yet we live in a land of vanishing beauty, of increasing ugliness, of shrinking open space, and of an overall environment that is diminished daily by pollution and noise and blight." (An excerpt from the book is on pages 44-46.)

He campaigned tirelessly for increased government planning and land use controls to meet the crisis and aided the passage of landmark environmental legislation. Those laws included the Federal Clean Air Act of 1963, Wilderness Act of 1964, Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965, National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968, and

strengthening the Federal Water Pollution Control Act of 1956. Other Udall initiatives that expanded Interior's role and influence were the establishment of four national seashores along the Atlantic coast, major pollution abatement efforts on Lake Erie and the Hudson, Delaware, and Potomac rivers, and a National Capital beautification campaign sponsored by **Lady Bird Johnson**. The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 capped this initial decade of effort.

The counter-culture movement of the late 1960s and groups opposed to the Vietnam War embraced environmental concerns, contributing to the growth of political activism during this period. The first Earth Day in 1970 marked the environmental movement's coming of age as a national grassroots crusade. Rallies, teach-ins, and demonstrations were held at 1,500 colleges and more than 10,000 elementary and secondary schools in all 50 states. A coalition of environmental leaders and groups played a vital role in the movement's growth, including **Howard Zahniser** and the Wilderness Society, **David Brower** and the Sierra Club, **Victor Yannacone** and the Environmental Defense Fund, as well as a wider circle of social and environmental reformers, including **Ralph Nader**, **Barry Commoner**, and **Paul Ehrlich**.

National legislative gains included the establishment of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in 1971, comprehensive water pollution legislation of 1972, Endangered Species Act of 1973, and Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976. Public outrage over the environmental degradation and social costs of strip coal mining led to the passage of the Federal Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act in 1977. The Middle East oil embargo of 1973 increased national environmental awareness by stimulating interest and research in alternative and "cleaner-burning" fuels. To cap this decade of progress, Interior Secretary **Cecil Andrus** prevailed upon **President Jimmy Carter** to reserve millions of acres in Alaska as national monuments until Congress passed the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act. Signed by Carter on Dec. 2, 1980,

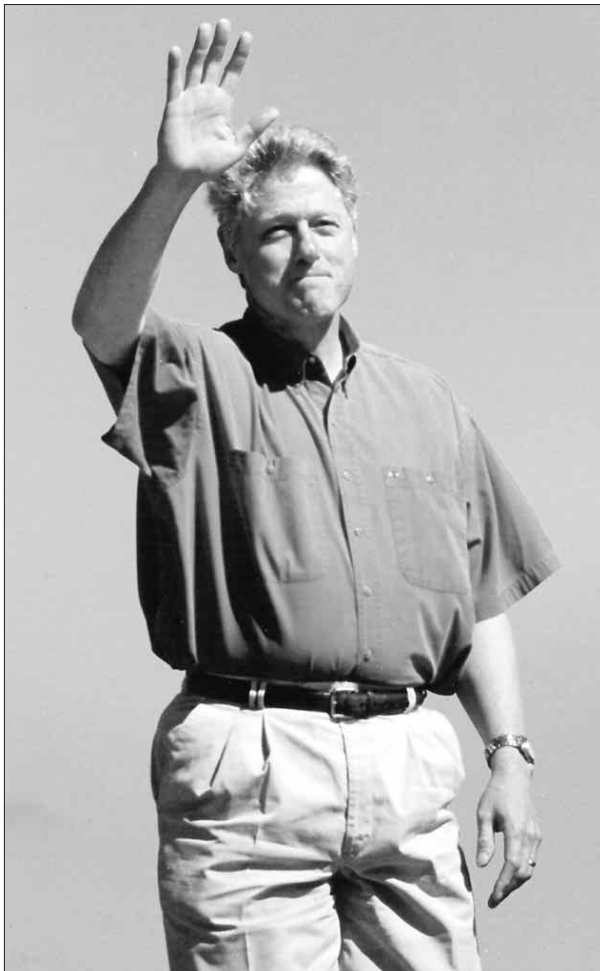


Robert T. Anderson
Counselor to the
Secretary

Anderson Focuses on Northwest Issues as Secretary's Counselor

Robert T. Anderson is counselor to the Secretary and his representative on Northwest issues. Based in Seattle since December 1997, Anderson is the chairman of Indian water rights settlement teams for several cases and also focuses on endangered species, hydroelectric, and National Park Service issues. He also has been the Secretary's representative for Alaska. Anderson joined Interior in April 1995 as associate solicitor for Indian Affairs, serving as the chief legal officer on Indian law matters. A member of the Bois Forte Band of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe, Anderson, 40, received his J.D. from the University of Minnesota Law School and is a member of the bar for the District of Columbia, Minnesota, Colorado, Alaska, and the U.S. Supreme Court. He previously was with the Native American Rights Fund for 12 years and took part in landmark cases on Alaska Native sovereignty and tribal hunting, fishing, and water rights. Anderson helped to develop the organization's substantive role in Alaska Native rights issues and assisted the tribes in asserting and protecting their legal rights. He also worked with tribes in the Lower 48 on water rights and other issues. "Bob Anderson is an experienced professional with an enormous grasp of the complexity of our trust responsibilities and Alaska Native and American Indian tribes," Secretary Babbitt said in naming Anderson to the Northwest post.

ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION



President Clinton's Northwest Forest Summit in 1993 launched a partnership approach that seeks to maintain the health of the land and the prosperity of the communities that depend on it for their livelihood. Restoration also underlies the Florida Everglades Initiative, the California Bay-Delta project, and dozens of other regional and local efforts across the nation. The President's fiscal year 2000 budget proposal expands this approach through the \$1 billion Lands Legacy Initiative—the largest one-year investment ever proposed for the restoration and protection of America's natural resources.

the past, incorporating the ideals of great conservationists while reflecting an increasingly sophisticated understanding of the natural landscape and the need for restoration. During the past four decades, advances in ecological science, the development of information technology and other technological tools, and a growing environmental ethic have played major roles in bringing the American people to this awareness. **Secretary Babbitt** describes the transition this way:

"We are at the threshold of something really good in the history of American conservation. Restoration is a word with power and vision and magic. To see the possibilities, it's important to contrast that word to John Muir's use of the word 'preservation.' The 20th Century has been largely about conservation—a big and powerful movement that says we must preserve natural treasures. We cannot let them degrade further, whether it's the Grand Canyon, Lake Tahoe, rivers, or landscapes.

"But the operative word was 'preserve'—create as many preserves out there as possible. It was founded I think in a sense that somehow you could bifurcate the landscape, that if we would protect the back 40, then we could go about our business in downtown Reno on the banks of the Truckee River. At the threshold of the 21st Century, we've come to understand that nature doesn't work that way—that everything relates. This takes us to this new word."

Restoration has been a major environmental theme of the 1990s. **President Clinton's** Northwest Forest Summit in 1993 embodied this approach, establishing a plan that sought not simply to conserve a few special places or prevent further environmental damage but to repair and restore landscapes, bringing them closer to their natural state. This concept underlies the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Project, with an emphasis on rebuilding the unique and magnificent Everglades ecosystem.

the act added more than 47 million acres to the National Park System and nearly 54 million to the National Wildlife Refuge System.

A new generation of Native Americans also struggled in the postwar era for the preservation and restoration of their way of life. By 1970 self-determination and self-government of Indian people had become the basis of federal Indian policy. The need to improve the quality of Indian education through better schools and more teachers became a priority. The tribal self-government movement has grown side-by-side with efforts to establish viable and vibrant tribal economies. On the reservations, mineral and timber resources are managed to sustain tribal communities and wildlife resources are being restored, including re-establishing herds of buffalo and reinvigorating the buffalo culture. Gaming industry initiatives also provide many reservation communities the sustained economic resources for promoting the well-being of tribal members.

The American people's new attitude toward the environment builds on

The idea shapes the California-Federal Bay-Delta effort, which involves pioneering work on a host of complex water issues, including improved through Delta conveyance, water transfers, groundwater storage, and other innovative techniques to help make the most of California's water for environmental uses and human consumption. The concept can be seen at work along the central Platte River, stretches of American Heritage Rivers, and in dozens of other major restoration partnerships across the nation.



The San Joaquin Delta, above, in California is a fragile estuary that is heavily relied on by agricultural and urban water users. Photo by Mark Volkoff

Restoration recognizes that understanding landscapes as complex, living, and integrated systems can result in better ways of living on and prospering from the land, while protecting wildlife and preserving nature's special places. Watershed-scale approaches seek to restore and preserve the nation's natural and cultural bounty while ensuring that economic development needs can be met. Restoration speaks of optimism, of hope, of change, of the ability to make a hands-on contribution. It involves an enormous act of imagination because it says change and improvement are achievable.

Restoration also requires partnerships that recognize that the fate of a watershed involves all of the people who live in it and benefit from it and who share responsibility in deciding its future. Habitat management plans and other flexible mechanisms to

restore wildlife and habitats without destroying American livelihoods or stifling prosperity have been keys to this partnership approach. These projects demonstrate that by working together, federal and state agencies, local communities, tribal governments, nonprofit groups, and the private sector can address issues and frame solutions. Most importantly, perhaps, restoration provides these partners an opportunity to leave a legacy for their children and grandchildren that is greater than the one they inherited.

"We're on the verge of a new movement," Secretary Babbitt has written, "an integrated view of the American landscape; a view that carries responsibility for every single citizen and every community; that places on us the possibility of pointing the way, illuminating the landscape, encouraging partnerships, finding the links, and putting them back together."

More histories of Interior bureaus and profiles of employees are in the Dedication Section, starting on page 57.



Secretary Babbitt on the fireline.